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SUBJECT Notes on PW Camps and Miscellaneous
Economic Information
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ORIGIN

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1. Reni (Izmail Oblast), situated on the Prut River, has no industries. Most of its former inhabitants migrated before the Russian occupation. A gasoline depot which stretches "as far as the eye can see" was being built here in November 1946. The construction, done by civilian workers who were brought to the site daily in trucks, included the digging of drainage ditches, the building of upright containers, and the digging of trenches four to six meters wide and two meters deep for the storage of gasoline. PWs worked only as porters.
2. There were three PW camps at Reni. One was an OK camp ("without strength"), which contained 2,500 Austrian, Hungarian, Italian, and German enlisted men up to the rank of first sergeant; all inmates were hospital cases over fifty years of age, who were gradually released. The camp had no number but its address was Post Office Box 38, Moscow. A second camp held 4,000 persons who were assigned to building barracks for Russian units in transit. The third camp also accommodated 4,000 men. The third camp was evacuated in the summer of 1946 to make room for Russian troops, and the other two were to be evacuated by the end of the year for the same reason. PWs in these camps were relatively well housed in barracks built of concrete blocks and equipped with stoves, electric lights, and home-made iron bedsteads. Each prisoner was given a straw mattress, a pillow, and a blanket. From six to fifty men were assigned to each barracks room.
3. The complement of Camp Ryazan in February 1947 was 4,000. PWs were employed in forest work, peat cutting, road repairs, and harvesting. The camp was guarded by armed Romanians. Officers were housed in a separate camp.
4. Camp 99/47A at Samarkand housed 800-900 enlisted men in January 1947. The main camp, Camp 99, was located in Karaganda and had 25 branch camps totalling 20,000 PWs. Camp W-99 (B-99aV-99) at Karaganda held 90,000 PWs in 22 groups. The PWs worked in stone quarries and pits and built living quarters and barracks for the civilian population. They were also employed in the construction of a new iron rolling mill, which began operating in August 1946. The guard personnel consisted of European Russians doing penal service, who begged bread from the PWs. Beginning in December 1946, bread was distributed according to work quotas filled by individual PWs and ranged from 400 to 700 gr. per day. Fish was served regularly, meat only rarely, fat even more rarely, and sugar only in the haw tea. Pay was 60-150 rubles per month. Non-workers received seven rubles in camp money. The camp had a canteen which sold the products reserved from the rations, such as cabbage and turnips, bread (1 ruble for 100 grs.), and salted fish. All who earned over 60 rubles

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a month were obliged to buy tobacco at 45 rubles for 200 gr.

5. In 1946, PWs in the camp at Rybinsk were used for carrying stone for the building of an electric plant which had been under construction since 1934. The work was speeded up with the help of German specialists. Six turbines were installed. When the plant began operation, the production of current proved unprofitable and the plant was dismantled by "eastern workers", who replaced the PWs. The PWs were transferred to Chkalov.
6. At Chkalov, 2,500 PWs were contained in sixteen outlying camps in January 1947. Six hundred and eighty PWs from Camp 476 worked in the lead mines 20 kms. SE of Chkalov. These PWs were housed 60 meters below the surface of the earth and were allowed two hours of fresh air every four weeks if the supervisor did not happen to be drunk. Production methods were obsolete and there were no electric or mechanical installations; consequently, the daily production was low, in spite of the use of the Stakhanov system. German books published by the Foreign Language Publishing Office in Moscow were available in the camp and "education in democracy" was given by German Antifa elements, who enjoyed the freedom of the camp and were given passes to leave the camp on furlough. Chkalov had about fifty permanent Antifa men.
7. According to a PW in the Chkalov camp, the Seydlitz Army was dissolved after the German capitulation and the members were given a choice between enlisting in the Soviet Army or remaining in Russia as workers. General von Seydlitz allegedly fell into disfavor with the Russians and was brought before a military court. The Russians are said to regard him as unreliable and to fear that he might turn against them if given the opportunity.

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